

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE VERNON J. EHLERS
RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Research on Environmental and Safety Impacts of Nanotechnology

October 31, 2007

10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

2318 Rayburn House Office Building

Thank you Chairman Baird. I am pleased that the Committee is holding this important hearing today, but I also hope that the “scary” reputation of today is not in any way linked with the topic at hand.

Nonetheless, the promises of nanotechnology often compete for media attention with coverage of the unknown pitfalls nanotechnology products may have on human health and the environment. The nanoscale is so under-explored that we know very little about the short and long-term environmental effects of nanomaterials in our ecosystem.

As our country invests in innovative research in nanotechnology, we must ensure that accurate risk assessments are conducted and communicated to all stakeholders. An atmosphere of trust between the nanotechnology industry and the public is necessary to allow benign products to benefit our nation, and to ensure that dangerous products and byproducts never enter the market or ecosystem. Congress must continually assess whether nanotechnology research priorities to address unintended public health consequences of nanotechnology have been established and are being effectively implemented. As this Committee prepares to reauthorize the National Nanotechnology Initiative, today’s witnesses will provide valuable insights on both conducting research and sharing its results with the public.

I look forward to hearing an update from our witnesses on this important topic.